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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8897
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1930
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY 1493
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0332
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RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 2341
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1726
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000102

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN

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SUBJECT: SADYRKULOV: ROSY OUTLOOK FOR KYRGYZSTAN AND
U.S.-KYRGYZ RELATIONS

BISHKEK 00000102 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MARIE L. YOVANOVITCH, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) Summary: During a lengthy conversation with Ambassador, First Deputy Chief of Staff Sadyrkulov predicted his own influence would increase and that Kyrgyzstan would push forward on reforms and improved relations with the west.

Ambassador emphasized the importance of resolving the legal issues between NDI, IRI and the Procurator General and the greater political issues. Sadyrkulov predicted some of the key figures in the new cabinet, including that Foreign Minister Jekshenkulov would likely stay on for six months. As the scotch continued to flow, Sadyrkulov described his complicated relationship with Kulov. End Summary.

"STEP BY STEP"

12. (C) On January 31, Ambassador met with President Bakiyev's First Deputy Chief of Staff Medet Sadyrkulov, who provided a positive outlook on the direction of the Bakiyev regime and relations with the U.S. During a lengthy conversation following an AUCA-hosted dinner, Sadyrkulov told Ambassador to expect to see significant and positive differences in the coming weeks. He claimed that recent changes in the cabinet will increase his own influence. "Everything is up to Bakiyev," he said, and indicated that those offering bad advice have been marginalized, so better decisions will soon emerge "step by step."

13. (C) Sadyrkulov said he believes Kyrgyzstan should be more oriented to the west, including the U.S., and away from "neighbors who want to control us and are not acting in Kyrgyzstan's best interest." Sadyrkulov admitted that the government had made some major mistakes in the past, specifically citing the two U.S. diplomats PNG'ed last summer. He added that Bakiyev understands these past mistakes. Told that February 1 marks the 15th year anniversary of the opening of the U.S. Embassy in

Bishkek*the first Embassy to open in Bishkek-Sadyrkulov suggested that the President attend the Embassy's anniversary event.

NDI AND IRI PROBLEMS STILL LINGERING

¶4. (C) Ambassador raised the most recent problems regarding NDI. Sadyrkulov was unaware of the particulars but said he would host a meeting with NDI and the Procurator General. Ambassador said resolution of the legal issues is welcome, but it is important to solve the larger political issues as well. She stressed that Congressional decisions regarding the Millennium Challenge Account for Kyrgyzstan may be directly and negatively affected, should problems for the international NGOs persist.

FORECAST FOR A NEW CABINET

¶5. (C) Sadyrkulov provided Ambassador with a number of predictions regarding the new cabinet. He predicted that Alikbek Jekshenkulov would stay on as Foreign Minister for at least another six months, "to oversee the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit." (Note: The next meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State is scheduled to take place in Bishkek in June. Kyrgyzstan has assumed the SCO presidency this year. End note.) Sadyrkulov said that acting Minister of Education, Nur Dosbol Uluu, would be replaced and that he was pressing for a young professor with "a progressive approach to education" instead of a Soviet-era education official. Sadyrkulov also anticipated that acting Deputy Foreign Minister Kadyrbek Sarbayev would be reassigned to the position of Foreign Policy Advisor to the President, replacing Ermek Ibragimov.

BISHKEK 00000102 002.2 OF 002

¶6. (C) When Ambassador asked for his opinion on the newly appointed Prime Minister, Sadyrkulov said that Isabekov will not operate independently but that Kyrgyzstan needs a PM focused on the economy, not an independent thinker. He cited Kulov as an example of a PM that meddled in politics when he should have been running the economy. Sadyrkulov said Kulov would begin building a new political party, becoming a force in the opposition. This will "force us to do the right thing," he said approvingly.

HATRED FOR KULOV RUNS DEEP

¶7. (C) This comment sparked a window into Sadyrkulov's loathing for former PM Felix Kulov. Sadyrkulov explained that soon after the March 2005 events, Kulov had promised him the position of manager of Kulov's presidential campaign. During the weeks that followed, the Bakiyev-Kulov tandem was formed and Kulov dropped out of the presidential race, leaving Sadyrkulov--who had just left his Ambassadorial position--high and dry. Shortly thereafter, the Prosecutor General opened an investigation into Sadyrkulov's alleged participation in illegal activity with former President Akayev. The investigation lasted nine months, during which Kulov offered no assistance. Days before he left office, Kulov invited Sadyrkulov to join him in the presidential dining room for some caviar and Hennessy, presumably to try to make amends. "Kulov double-crossed too many people", Sadyrkulov explained, "and maybe now he understands that."

COMMENT

¶8. (C) Sadyrkulov was relaxed and had no qualms about pounding back glass after glass of scotch. He was also very confident about his own position and predictions. Sadyrkulov clearly has an interest in convincing us that Bakiyev really is a reformer and that relations with the U.S. will soon

improve; however, we also note that Sadyrkulov's predictions often prove to be correct. We can only hope that this is the case this time. If only a portion of what Sadyrkulov shared is true, Sadyrkulov deserves his reputation as the Machiavelli of Kyrgyz politics. Finally, the vignette on the Kulov-Sadyrkulov relationship reveals that Sadyrkulov holds a grudge--and knows how to exact revenge. He implied that if he is not the architect of Kulov's swift fall from grace, he certainly participated in drawing up the blueprints.

YOVANOVITCH